

DNR News

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Rural Smiths of Mid-America to hold 2007 Summer Conference at Fort Harrison State Park

The 2007 Summer Conference of the Rural Smiths of Mid-America will be held at Fort Harrison State Park on July 7 & 8 at the Nature History Center. This year's featured demonstrator will be Blacksmith William (Bill) Fiorini of DeSoto, Wisconsin.

Mr. Fiorini has been pursuing pattern development in ferrous and non-ferrous metals for the past 15 years. He has been researching old patterns used by metal smiths in Japan and Europe. Mr. Fiorini has been available for demos that range from beginner to advanced tool making, forge welding, pattern development, knife and gun barrel making, and steel jewelry.

The Rural Smiths of Mid-America are a group of Blacksmiths across the Midwest that features the traditional methods of the art of blacksmithing. The public is invited to attend the conference and the blacksmithing demonstrations.

Blacksmithing was an important part of pioneer life in rural Lawrence in the 19th century on the small, family farms that made up the community. Blacksmiths were also an important part of the early days of Fort Harrison when horses and mules provided transportation for the troops prior to the invention of trucks and cars for military use.